

# Supporting refugees and people seeking asylum



## The Opportunity

Council welcomes the Federal Government's reforms of the Protection Visa system, which has offered permanency to thousands of refugees in Greater Dandenong. There are still 700 people in the City who face the prospect of persecution and conflict in their homelands. Granting them permanent residency would provide safety and protection for children and families.

## How you can help us

**Greater Dandenong is home to the second highest number of people living on Bridging Visas in Victoria.**

**BACK YOUR NEIGHBOUR**

The 'Back Your Neighbour' campaign led by Council, is supported by **over 40 Local Governments** and more than **70 community organisations nationally**.

Many families and children in Dandenong do not have work rights and/or access to basic services. As a result, they live in poverty and seek desperate financial and material aid from local services and Council. **In April 2024 alone, the Dandenong Red Cross supported over 300 families with food and clothing.**

Council's *Back Your Neighbour* campaign recommends for the Federal Government to:

- **Provide people with a valid visa and the opportunity to work**, so they can contribute their skills to our society, remain independent and stay engaged in the asylum process.
- **Expand access to health care, income support and essential services so people in crisis have basic support** via the *Status Resolution Support Service Program*. Four out of five people in crisis are currently ineligible for financial assistance from the Federal Government.
- **Grant permanent visas to people who have been refused a visa via the 'Fast Track' process.** More than 8,000 people who have arrived over a decade ago to seek refugee protection, continue to live without safety and certainty.

## How the community will benefit:

Our residents seeking asylum are facing homelessness and deep poverty even with Council stepping in to help. If they were eligible for Federal support, their immediate needs would be addressed. Further, granting permanent visas to those living in limbo, will at last resolve the matter, enabling them to rebuild their lives.

We all have a shared responsibility to make our communities inclusive and for people to rebuild their lives in safety to best contribute to our local community.